



Grandchild Injured Scam

Scam Overview:

While there are several variations, the two popular versions of this scam are:

- You receive a call from “your grandchild” who says they were in an accident and need money
- You receive a call from “authorities” who say “your grandchild” was in an accident and money must be sent to post bail

Excerpt From a Recent Scam:

Following is an actual summary from a friend of a friend who was recently scammed for over \$50,000.

This all began on either March 1 or Feb 28. The Mikey on the end of the phone line sounded different from the real Mikey. When we asked him about his voice being “off,” it was explained he’d had a hairline fracture of his nose, which was the result of the traffic accident “Mikey” had caused and for which he had gotten a DUI.

He was in a holding cell in downtown San Mateo, at the County Administration Center or another County facility. I’m not positive why he called us with the one and only phone call he was allowed to make that morning, but he did.

What he especially needed at that moment were huge hugs, either real or virtual, and given the circumstances under which he called us, he got his virtual hugs. More importantly, Mikey needs hugs from his parents and brother but obviously can’t have them. Mikey made a stupid mistake, and he knows it. Back to his call. At the time he called us, I’m not sure if he used the term “gag order” or not, but he repeated several times that “my lawyer, Richard Lewis, says you cannot talk to anyone about this case, or it will be awful for me.” We also may have spoken with the paralegal, Rose Lasall, from Lewis’ law firm, who emphasized several times that we could not talk with anyone else, including interviewing substitute lawyers. She said Mikey had called us with his one phone call, which made us the only people who could know about this case other than Lewis and Lasalle, Mikey’s lawyer and paralegal. We were desperate to talk to Mikey’s parents, but for Mikey’s sake and future, we did not. Not sharing this situation was one of the hardest things we ever have done, but it was critically important that we not tell anyone else anything or even give anyone a reason to think something was going on that you should know about.

This event resulted in a series of payments (e.g., bail, attorney retainer, etc.) totaling over \$50,000, with the last request being “how much do you have....”

Red Flag Assessment:

Note: The Red Flag Assessment leverages the benefit of “**20/20 hindsight**” to identify scams. The more Red Flags, the greater the likelihood of this being a scam.

- **“Grandchild’s” voice didn’t match his normal voice**
- **Urgent action required (common trait across most scams)**
- **Confusion about details**
- **Request for money to be sent, often wire transfer, often out of the country**
- **Child didn’t reach out to his parents or direct guardian who would know they are safe**
- **Threats based on legal advice--using “authority figures” to ensure compliance**
- **Contradicting and missing details**
- **Stressing the need for isolation and secrecy**

What To Do If You Are Contacted:

This scam follows the same basic principles as all scams reflected in the End Elder Fraud Awareness training sessions, specifically “FEAR” coupled with a sense of “URGENCY.” A key control element in this scam is the directive to “NOT TELL ANYONE.” Being instructed to “NOT TELL ANYONE” is not a real-world situation. As such, the following is recommended.

1. If you receive a suspicious “grandchild injured” call, hang up the call immediately and contact the “grandchild’s” parents/guardian.
2. ***IMPORTANT: SCAMMERS WILL IMMEDIATELY TRY TO CALL YOU BACK TO PREVENT YOU FROM VERIFYING THE VALIDITY OF THE CALL. DO WHAT YOU CAN TO AVOID THE SCAMMERS UNTIL YOU VERIFY THE SITUATION WITH RELATIVE'S YOU CONTACT.***
3. If you can confirm that the relative is safe.
4. Contact local law enforcement to report the scam attempt.
5. Implement “Non-Contact Block” to prevent the scammers from switching phone numbers to contact you further.

[Non-Contact Block – iPhone]

1. Go to Settings
2. Scroll down until you see Phone
3. Select “Silence Unknown Callers”

This option will direct all callers that are not already on your iPhone CONTACT list to be directed to Voicemail. If someone truly needs to reach you, they will leave a message. You will be notified of all calls diverted directly to vMail.